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Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fifty-seventh session in New York from 22 to 24 February 2012 and its fifty-eighth session in Geneva from 4 to 6 July 2012. The Board focused its deliberations during its sessions on the following substantive items on its agenda: (a) ways to improve the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters; (b) conventional arms regulation: the future United Nations architecture; and (c) follow-up discussions on the issue of the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament.

The first item was discussed at the Board's fifty-seventh session only as a result of views expressed by many members at its fifty-sixth session in Geneva in July 2011 that it would be timely for the Board to examine ways to improve its method of work. The Board had an in-depth exchange of views on the second item during both 2012 sessions. The Board recommended that the Secretary-General stress the need for a consistent and non-redundant architecture for conventional arms on the basis of the centrality of such United Nations tools as the Register of Conventional Arms and of negotiations mandated, conducted or endorsed by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General could request the appropriate structure, such as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a possible future arms trade treaty support unit, or a technical working group, to consider and report on the following: (a) overlaps between existing instruments; (b) ways to improve communication between the instruments and Governments, as well among them; (c) ways to assist States with implementation and reporting under the existing instruments and frameworks; and (d) how the United

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Nations and the regional instruments relate to each other and how they can be utilized for mutual reinforcement. The Secretary-General should also be encouraged to promote confidence-building measures in the military sphere among countries in different regions with the assistance of regional organizations, as appropriate, and should also continue efforts to promote awareness of circumstances in which there could be negative consequences of the arms trade. The Board considered the third item on its agenda, revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, during its fifty-eighth session only. In view of the fact that the Board had considered at both its 2011 sessions the issues raised at the high-level meeting on "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations", held on 24 September 2010, including the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons with a special focus on the functioning of the Conference, the Secretary-General requested the Board to consider the issue again at its July session in 2012. The Board recommended that the Secretary-General continue his efforts to encourage the Conference to pursue all efforts to achieve a breakthrough in the persisting stalemate and that he could consider initiating a process of consultation with all concerned States to build consensus to commence substantive work on negotiations in respect of a fissile material cut-off treaty under a balanced programme of work. The Secretary-General might also wish to consider an appropriate dedicated modality for that purpose, including the appointment of a special envoy or coordinator to assist him in his efforts. Parallel to his consultations, the Secretary-General might wish to consider encouraging members of the Conference to establish groups of scientific experts in the Conference with a mandate to explore technical and scientific issues to support work on a future cut-off treaty. In addition, the Secretary-General should continue his efforts to raise public awareness and encourage civil society groups and non-governmental organizations to provide input on ways to break the prolonged stalemate at the Conference, and he could also encourage Member States to take steps to restore the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations disarmament machinery by inviting them to promote the cause of disarmament in the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies so that it remains on the agenda.

As the Board of Trustees for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Board adopted the Institute's 2012 programme and budget and approved, for submission to the General Assembly, the report of the Director of the Institute on its activities from August 2011 to July 2012, as well as the proposed programme of work and estimated budget for 2012 and 2013. The importance of adequate funding in order for the Institute to maintain its sustainability was stressed by members of the Board. The Board also recommended the continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 2012-2013. The Board reiterated its earlier recommendation that the level of the subvention be increased to fully fund all core staff costs, which is a requisite for providing the stability needed to allow the Institute to pursue the structure and programme of work justified by its vision and mission.

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fifty-seventh session in New York from 22 to 24 February 2012 and its fifty-eighth session in Geneva from 4 to 6 July 2012. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 O. The report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), approved by the Advisory Board serving as its Board of Trustees, has been submitted in a separate document (A/67/169).

2. Hewa M. G. S. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka) chaired the two sessions of the Board in 2012.

3. The present report summarizes the Board's deliberations during the two sessions and the specific recommendations it conveyed to the Secretary-General.

II. Substantive discussions and recommendations

A. Ways to improve the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

4. A number of members of the Board stated at the 2011 session in Geneva that it would be timely for the Board to examine ways to improve its method of work. The Secretary-General agreed with the suggestion and requested the Board to look at its working method for one session, in February 2012.

5. At its fifty-seventh session, two Board members, Carlo Trezza and Olga Pellicer presented "food-for-thought" papers on the item.

6. Following an in-depth exchange of views, the Board agreed on the importance of maintaining a suitable balance in its composition, in terms of the balance between government and non-governmental members, equitable regional representation, generational balance and gender balance. In particular, a number of Board members pointed to the absence of members from the Middle East and the underrepresentation of certain regions. Some members questioned the benefits of a full and constant presence of Board members coming from the States that are permanent members of the Security Council. The need for an eventual increase in the number of Board members as a way to achieve better geographical representation was mentioned.

7. Concerns were raised that striving for consensus should not hamper the work of the Board. Members agreed that while achieving consensus on issues could be seen positively, it should not be an absolute necessity in the way of constituting an obstacle to conveying new ideas. Some members stressed that the Board should strive to provide the Secretary-General with bold and creative recommendations and that differing views should be properly reflected. Members also expressed the importance of providing the Secretary-General with both good and practical recommendations. Extensive discussions also took place on ways to improve the modalities of reporting the work of the Board to the Secretary-General.

8. Members concurred on the usefulness of engaging in some type of intersessional dialogue among the members, using various communication tools such as the Internet, e-mail, videoconferencing or teleconferencing. Proposals were

made by several members to create subgroups or small working groups to tackle specific items during the intersessional period or even during the regular sessions of the Board, if needed. Members expressed their wish to revisit the usefulness of such an intersessional dialogue in the near future. A suggestion was also made to have the UNIDIR subcommittee become active as soon as it was composed rather than waiting for its one-day meeting prior to the Board's fifty-eighth session in Geneva.

9. A question was raised in regard to the need to update decision 5 .418 of the General Assembly concerning the Board's mandate, particularly its role related to the implementation of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme. There was agreement, however, that there was no need to revisit the issue at the present stage, nor was there a need to narrow the Board's existing mandate. In that connection, the Board received an extensive briefing on the Programme from the Chief of the Information and Outreach Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Consequently, the Board requested that it be kept regularly informed of the Programme through updates from the Office.

10. Other suggestions included a proposal to have food-for-thought papers prepared and circulated earlier if possible, as well as limiting the number of items considered by the Board to just two to allow more time for their consideration.

B. Conventional arms regulation: the future United Nations architecture

11. Over the past two decades, initiatives at the United Nations regarding conventional arms regulation have led to a number of new processes and instruments. With the development of such arms regulation instruments, it would be important to avoid any overlap and duplication. Consequently, the Board was requested to address the interrelationship among processes in the area of conventional arms regulation and formulate recommendations on ways in which Member States could work together on making the United Nations architecture on conventional arms regulation as coherent and effective as possible.

12. At the Board's fifty-seventh session, two members, Nobuyasu Abe and Togzhan Kassenova, provided food-for-thought papers. A presentation on the topic was also provided to the Board by Daniel Prins, Chief of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

13. The Board acknowledged that the various existing conventional arms instruments had potential overlaps but expressed the view that such overlaps could also be mutually reinforcing. Members concurred that the existing instruments had different mandates, with some legally binding, while others remained politically binding and therefore, efforts to coordinate all the instruments faced significant challenges. Limitations in the existing instruments were also recognized. Consequently, many members underlined the need to consider ways to make the architecture more coherent and consistent while promoting the most efficient use of the instruments. It was also stated that full consistency and streamlining might not be feasible or desirable given the different scope and circumstances of the instruments.

14. The Board also noted that the problem of conventional arms went beyond disarmament and touched upon such areas as development, good governance, public health, human rights and trade. Many members emphasized the need to address the

effects of conventional weapons on crime, human rights, humanitarian concerns and law enforcement. Emphasis was also placed on the need to encourage efforts to control the illicit trade in conventional arms, as well as explore the link between conventional weapons and other United Nations goals such as peace and development.

15. Proposals were made to establish a technical working group that would be given the task of considering which overlaps between existing instruments could be eliminated, taking into account that some instruments were mutually reinforcing; ways to improve communication between the instruments and within the Governments; ways to assist States with implementation and reporting under the existing instruments and frameworks; and how the United Nations and the regional instruments related to each other and how they could be utilized for mutual reinforcement.

16. Some members stated the need for the Secretary-General to pay special attention to greater public outreach on the issue of the arms trade treaty, particularly in countries impacted by such weapons, as well as the fact that the general public was mostly unaware of the issue. The importance of civil society support and public discourse on the topic was also stressed. Other members commented that the Secretary-General should intensify his advocacy role and encourage States to achieve a positive outcome for the treaty negotiations. It was stated, however, that the Board should be careful about any recommendations, since the treaty process was still ongoing and the outcome was far from certain owing to the considerable divergence of views. It was generally felt that any United Nations architecture in the area of conventional arms needed to take into account the limitations and strengths of existing instruments; that it should be based on the outcome of the ongoing negotiations; and that it should also take into account non-United Nations activities in this area as well as the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

17. It was suggested that the Secretary-General request that the First Committee or the Fifth Committee seek possible overlaps in terms of efficiency that could lead to budgetary savings. One member mentioned the need for the Secretary-General to avoid any overlaps and seek better coordination and use of resources. A suggestion was also made that the United Nations could develop a database that would help to create a more unified system for information exchange on conventional arms.

18. A comment was made on the importance of tackling the issue of transparency together with efficiency. The need to generate transparency in terms of the transfer, production and use of conventional weapons was stressed. It was also proposed to include the issue of a preventive agenda in the Board's deliberations on the question.

19. The Board continued its deliberations on the item at its fifty-eighth session. As a means of improving its method of work, the Board agreed at its fifty-seventh session in New York to set up two subgroups which would exchange opinions on the two items on the agenda for the Geneva session and possibly prepare common food-for-thought papers during the intersessional period.

20. Consequently, two members, Mr. Abe and François Rivasseau, provided food-for-thought papers on the basis of views exchanged during the intersessional period among members of the subgroup on the item.

21. Several Board members reiterated that the issue of conventional arms went beyond the regulation of arms transfers and disarmament and was also linked to development, public health, trade, human rights and humanitarian law issues. Therefore, it was suggested that the scope of the proposed arms trade treaty should not be limited. The widest possible transparency in the realm of conventional arms was mentioned as a key point. In particular, the principles of transparency, accountability and the responsibility of States were stressed by a number of Board members.

22. The potential for overlaps between a future arms trade treaty and existing instruments in the field of conventional arms was again considered by the Board. Some members recalled the suggestions made at the fifty-seventh session regarding the creation of a technical working group to study where overlaps might exist and consider ways to improve communication between and within the instruments and Governments. A member expressed doubt over the need for such a technical working group. The need to await the outcome of the negotiations on the arms trade treaty was stressed.

23. It was also mentioned that the arms trade was directly linked to the issue of military spending and the fight against poverty, as well as criminal activities. It was pointed out that the Secretary-General could play a significant role in drawing attention to the negative aspects of the global arms trade. In contrast, the legitimate right of States, especially smaller States, to ensure their territorial integrity and sovereignty was also acknowledged by many members.

24. The Board also discussed the most appropriate way of implementing a future legally binding instrument that would regulate conventional arms trade, depending on the outcome of the ongoing arms trade treaty negotiations. As the future implementation process might include submitting reports, building national capacity in related areas and providing assistance, the Board also exchanged views on United Nations experiences in supporting the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), through their respective implementation support units. Many members underlined the need for strong verification and implementation measures for a robust arms trade treaty.

25. The importance of the responsibility of States was mentioned by several members. It was emphasized that all States had a responsibility to control the production, use and flow of weapons on or through their territory. States should also be prepared to fulfil their obligations when restrictions on the flow, use or production of weapons were established by the appropriate international bodies. It was also mentioned that the Secretary-General could remind States of those responsibilities at both the national and international levels.

26. It was stated that while streamlining its work relating to conventional arms, the United Nations Secretariat should secure sufficient resources to carry out the tasks that might result from new arrangements such as the prospective arms trade treaty.

27. Suggestions were also made that the Secretary-General and the Secretariat should encourage more vigorous activities by various regional organizations to promote the conventional arms instruments of the United Nations. While doing so, the organizations might consider using United Nations reporting forms, complemented by additional elements for regional use. The need to look into the

relation between the United Nations and the regional instruments was also mentioned, particularly regarding whether they could be mutually reinforcing.

28. It was proposed to advise the Secretary-General to focus on promoting transparency in conventional arms and establishing a comprehensive United Nations database which would reflect the implementation of the existing instruments in the sphere of conventional arms.

29. Other comments highlighted the increasingly important role of civil society, particularly women's organizations, in global efforts to regulate the arms trade; the need for the arms trade treaty to require States not to transfer arms internationally where there is a sustained risk that they might be used to perpetrate or facilitate a pattern of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence; and the need for assistance with capacity-building, particularly for small States.

Recommendations

30. **The Board made the following recommendations:**

(a) **The Secretary-General should stress, where appropriate, the need for a consistent and non-redundant architecture for conventional arms based on the centrality of such United Nations tools as the Register of Conventional Arms and for negotiations mandated, conducted or endorsed by the General Assembly, such as, in particular, the arms trade treaty;**

(b) **The Secretary-General could request the appropriate structure such as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, UNIDIR, a possible future arms trade treaty support unit or a technical working group to consider and report on the following: (i) overlaps between existing instruments; (ii) ways to improve communication between the instruments and Governments; (iii) ways to assist States with implementation and reporting under the existing instruments and frameworks; and (iv) how the United Nations and the regional instruments relate to each other and how they can be utilized for mutual reinforcement;**

(c) **The Secretary-General should be encouraged to promote confidence-building measures in the military sphere among countries in different regions, with the assistance of regional organizations, as appropriate;**

(d) **The Secretary-General should continue efforts to promote awareness of circumstances in which there can be negative consequences of the arms trade, for example when it involves organized crime or violations of human rights.**

C. Follow-up discussions on the issue of the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament

31. The item on follow-up discussions on the issue of the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament was proposed by the Board as an item for future consideration. In view of the fact that the Board had considered at its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions, in 2011, the issues raised at the high-level meeting on "Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations", held on 24 September 2010, including the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons with special focus

on the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, the Secretary-General requested the Board to engage in follow-up discussions on the item again at its fifty-eighth session, in July 2012, taking into consideration any new developments at the Conference since its fifty-sixth session.

32. Members of the subgroup on the item conducted intersessional work, and a food-for-thought paper was provided by Kate Dewes for the fifty-eighth session. Tim Caughley, Resident Senior Fellow at UNIDIR, also provided an updated paper on developments at the Conference on Disarmament. Briefings on the topic were also provided to the Board by Jarmo Sareva, Director of the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and Mr. Caughley.

33. Many members reiterated the need for continued efforts to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament. The need to maintain the status of the Conference as a uniquely important forum for the negotiation of multilateral disarmament agreements and treaties in spite of the prolonged impasse was underlined. Opinions were also expressed that the ongoing difficulties faced by the Conference were caused by largely external political factors. Nonetheless, the need to consider reforming the decision-making processes of the Conference to allow for an institutional normative structure that facilitated the advancement of negotiations was mentioned. Views were also expressed that if the stalemate persisted, alternative solutions would be unavoidable.

34. Several Board members reiterated support for an incremental approach as the most feasible means of breaking the deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament. They suggested the establishment of informal scientific and technical groups within the Conference to explore and clarify issues related to a future fissile material cut-off treaty.

35. Suggestions were made that the General Assembly could establish a negotiating body parallel to the Conference on Disarmament. Suggestions were also made to use the General Assembly as another venue to engage in negotiations, including on a fissile material cut-off treaty, by establishing one negotiating body subordinated to it and deciding what kind of issues should be negotiated by that body. Such proposals were countered by views that it would not work, since several or all nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-capable States might not participate in such an initiative.

36. Some members acknowledged the significant support by over 140 States for the call by the Secretary-General, in his five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament, for the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention or similar instrument and the growing support within civil society and States for exploration of alternative venues to the Conference on Disarmament.

37. The question of the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons was raised again by some members but did not find strong support. Doubts were expressed whether and how such a group would be helpful in breaking the stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament. Several members expressed a preference for the appointment of a special envoy or coordinator to engage in consultations, especially with the concerned parties. Such an envoy would also likely be more affordable in terms of costs than the suggested high-level panel. However, concerns were also expressed over the possible overlap in functions with

the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs or the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

38. Nonetheless, should a high-level panel of eminent persons be established, the need to establish an institutional link between the Advisory Board and the proposed high-level panel by inviting one or more current or former Board members to be included in the panel was reiterated by a Board member.

39. Some members expressed the view that the decision of 29 May 2009 on the establishment of a programme of work for its 2009 session (CD/1864) could still serve as a basis for future negotiations and should not be discarded. Other members, however, stated that the outlook for resurrecting the decision was not promising.

40. Some members revisited the suggestion made in 2011 in connection with the adoption of a fissile material cut-off treaty, proposing a similar approach to the six-party talks on the Korean peninsula in the case of the South Asian region, to hold five-party talks between China, India, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America as an avenue for confidence-building measures. However, doubts were also voiced over the feasibility of the proposal. There were also calls for creative leadership by the States that are permanent members of the Security Council in terms of bilateral or other negotiations on a cut-off treaty.

41. The need for the Secretary-General to encourage States to take steps to restore the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations and its disarmament machinery was emphasized. It was stated that disarmament was implicitly on the agenda of many other United Nations bodies and therefore, the Secretary-General should invite Member States to promote the cause of disarmament in the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies so that it remained on the agenda.

42. It was generally felt that there was decreased interest in revisiting the issue of changing the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament and that such actions might not improve the situation. Attempts to change the consensus rule would not work, given the long-standing consensus-based character of the Conference and the demonstrated ability of the Conference in the past to conclude treaties by consensus. Doubts were expressed whether changing the rules of procedure would be decisive in attaining progress in the Conference.

43. Some members expressed support again for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. A comment was made, however, that such a special session would normally pursue decisions by consensus while a regular General Assembly session would be able to take decisions through voting if needed. It was also mentioned that consideration could be given to the feasibility of a special session of the General Assembly confined to addressing issues relevant to the disarmament machinery of the United Nations.

44. A view was expressed that the Secretary-General should be encouraged to highlight the fourth Disarmament Decade by giving priority to the urgent need for disarmament education and research, using the excellent work being done by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in this field.

Recommendations

45. **The Board made the following recommendations:**

(a) **The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to encourage the Conference on Disarmament to pursue all efforts to achieve a breakthrough in the persisting stalemate. The Secretary-General could consider initiating a process of consultation with all concerned States to build consensus to commence substantive work on negotiations in respect of a fissile material cut-off treaty under a balanced programme of work. The Secretary-General may also wish to consider an appropriate dedicated modality for this purpose, including the appointment of a special envoy or coordinator to assist him in his efforts;**

(b) **Parallel to his consultations, the Secretary-General may wish to consider encouraging members of the Conference on Disarmament to establish groups of scientific experts in the Conference with a mandate to explore technical and scientific issues to support work on a future fissile material cut-off treaty;**

(c) **The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to raise public awareness and encourage civil society groups and non-governmental organizations to provide input on ways to break the prolonged stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament. The Secretary-General could also encourage Member States to take steps to restore the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations disarmament machinery by inviting them to promote the cause of disarmament in the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies so that it remains on the agenda.**

III. Presentations by civil society/non-governmental organizations

46. As is customary, the Board heard presentations on issues pertaining to its agenda from representatives of non-governmental organizations. At its fifty-seventh session, Jeff Abramson, Coordinator of the Control Arms Campaign, and Stephen Goose, Director of the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch, head of delegation of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Chair of the Cluster Munition Coalition, provided briefings to the Board.

47. At its fifty-eighth session, the Board heard presentations from Glenn McDonald, Senior Researcher and Yearbook Coordinator at the Small Arms Survey, and Jonathan Frerichs, programme executive for peacebuilding and disarmament of the World Council of Churches and its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

IV. Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

48. At its fifty-seventh session, the Advisory Board, sitting as the Board of Trustees, received a briefing from the Director of UNIDIR on the work of the Institute since the previous session of the Board in July 2011, and an update on its programme of work for 2012. The Director informed the Board of the decision to

abolish the Deputy-Director's post owing to the lack of sufficient funds. Many members commended the research activities carried out by UNIDIR despite the continuing difficulties in raising funds. Concerns were expressed by the Board on the serious funding situation faced by the Institute. Views were exchanged on ways in which the Board could provide assistance and advice to UNIDIR in meeting its financial challenges. Several Board members stressed the need to further communicate the Institute's precarious situation to the Secretary-General, as well as to delegations.

49. The Board underlined the importance of broadening the UNIDIR funding base to include a more diverse set of Member States, as currently only 10 per cent of the Member States make contributions. The Board also recognized the importance of the Institute's pursuit of both public and private partnerships. It was also recommended that UNIDIR make more efforts to publicize its activities and obtain funding from other regions of the world.

50. The Board approved the Institute's report and budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (A/66/123), which was presented at the Board's fifty-sixth session in Geneva in July 2011 and updated by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

51. The Board also welcomed the establishment of a distinctive emblem (logo) for the Institute and looked forward to its introduction in UNIDIR branding at the earliest date possible. The Board also endorsed the resource mobilization strategy of the Director as approved by the Office of Legal Affairs. The strategy has demonstrated small yet significant successes, which were all the more remarkable considering the global financial crisis and the extremely negative funding outlook for the traditional donor States. The Board welcomed the steps towards implementation of its 2005 recommendations related to UNIDIR staff contractual compliance with the Staff Regulations and Rules. As funding permits, the Board expected that UNIDIR would begin to establish specific posts for the core functions of the Institute and work with the Human Resources Management Service to ensure that current staff service were taken into account. The Board also expressed its strong disappointment that United Nations regular budget support for the core staff of UNIDIR had not been forthcoming. It reiterated its call for subvention support for the core staff of the Institute as permitted under article VII, paragraph 2, of the UNIDIR statute (see General Assembly resolution 39/148 H, annex).

52. At the fifty-eighth session of the Board, the Director of the Institute briefed the Board members on the work of the Institute since the Board's session in February 2012 and planned activities for 2013 and beyond, and on the proposed programme of work and budget, including a request for a continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget. A subcommittee on UNIDIR, consisting of five Board members, met on 3 July, prior to the regular session, to review the Institute's programme and financial situation in detail.

53. The Board strongly commended again the broad range of research activities carried out by UNIDIR despite its persisting difficulties in obtaining sufficient funds. It was able to engage in an in-depth discussion of the challenges faced by the Institute in its funding activities and what could be done to alleviate the situation. The importance of adequate funding for the Institute was stressed in order for UNIDIR to maintain its independence.

54. At the same time, the Board expressed deep concerns over the institutional obstacles which continued to pose serious hurdles to the Institute's efforts to improve its management and funding difficulties. Board members were of the view that the current funding model for UNIDIR was inadequate and required significant and urgent changes. To work on those required changes, a suggestion was made to resume meetings of an intersessional subcommittee on UNIDIR, which could meet briefly during the latter part of the year, subject to the availability of funds.

55. Whether or not the subcommittee meeting materialized, the Board requested the Chair to brief the Secretary-General on the current situation of concern pertaining to the Institute and to request expeditious action on the part of UNIDIR and the United Nations Secretariat to develop a sustainable business plan and core funding plan for the Institute.

56. After considering the Institute's report, the Board approved the submission of that report to the General Assembly and also recommended the continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 2012-2013, while also reiterating its earlier recommendation (see A/66/125, para. 36) that the subvention level be increased, in addition to being cost adjusted, to "fully fund all core staff costs, as a requisite for providing the stability needed to allow the Institute to pursue the structure and programme of work justified by its vision and mission". The Board noted that in recent years the buying power of the subvention had decreased to a level that no longer supported even the costs of the Director, thus falling short of its original purpose.

V. Future work

57. The Board exchanged views on a number of possible issues for discussion at its sessions in 2013, including a broad range of issues such as cybersecurity, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security in outer space, dual-use technologies and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional arms issues following the outcome of the arms trade treaty negotiations.

58. Possible specific topics that were suggested were (a) relations between different nuclear-weapon-free zones; (b) space security, including preventing the placement of arms in outer space; (c) the role of emerging powers in the global nuclear order; and (d) changes in the landscape of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

VI. Conclusion

59. During both its sessions in 2012, the Board was able to successfully conclude deliberations on the three items in its agenda. It provided a set of recommendations to the Secretary-General on the issue of conventional arms regulation: the future United Nations architecture and on the issue of the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. As the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), it spent considerable time looking into the research activities of the Institute and particularly the continuing serious funding challenges faced by UNIDIR.

Annex

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

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[b] Participated in the Board's fifty-eighth session only.